



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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"OUTSIDE DATES" SET FOR HUNTING OF DOVES, RAILS, GALLINULES, WOODCOCK, AND BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

Revisions in bag limits and adjustments in seasons for some areas were announced today by the Department of the Interior in releasing the framework of "outside dates" for State selections of hunting seasons for doves, rails, gallinules, woodcock, and band-tailed pigeons in the United States. Migratory bird hunting seasons in Alaska are included in this announcement.

Principal changes this year include a reduction of 20 days in the rail season for the Mississippi and Central Flyways on account of the drought; an increase of one day in the white-winged dove season in Texas in view of a substantial increase in this year's white-winged dove breeding population in that State; a reduction in the bag and possession limits on sora; and a reduction in daily bag and possession limits on brant in Alaska because of a significant decline in the brant population in the Pacific Flyway.

This portion of the annual revision of the hunting regulations, as prepared by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the Fish and Wildlife Service, sets forth the "outside dates" for these species as follows: mourning doves, September 1 through January 15; rails and gallinules, September 1 through January 10; woodcock, October 1 to January 15; and band-tailed pigeons, September 1 through January 10. Within these sets of dates the various State game departments may select their own seasons for hunting these birds. The specific dates will be published later after the States have notified the Department of their selections.

Regulations by species will be as follows:

Rails and Gallinules. Open seasons are prescribed only for the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. A season of 70 consecutive days may be

selected by Atlantic Flyway States. Because drought conditions in the pothole country may adversely affect the rail populations in the Central and Mississippi Flyways, the season has been reduced from 70 to 50 consecutive days.

This year bag and possession limits on rails will be the same for all species, 15 and 30 in the Atlantic Flyways, and 15 and 15 in the Mississippi and Central Flyways. This reduces sora from 25 to 15.

Woodcock. Season length remains at 40 days and the daily bag and possession limit at 4 and 8.

Mourning Doves. Since the 1959 dove breeding population is about the same as in 1958, regulations will remain the same as last year. Within the September 1-January 15 framework, all States east of the Mississippi River, and Arkansas and Louisiana, may submit recommendations for hunting seasons that conform to the following conditions: (a) hunting only between the hours of 12:00 noon to sunset; (b) 65 consecutive half-days; or (c) two periods totaling 65 half-days.

For all States west of the Mississippi River (exclusive of Arkansas and Louisiana, and except Texas as explained under white-winged doves), the 1959 season will be the same as in 1958, 50 full days.

Possession limit on mourning doves throughout the entire country (except in California and New Mexico), will be 20 after the first day of the season with the daily bag limit remaining at 10--the same as in 1958.

In New Mexico the daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves or 10 white-winged doves, or 10 in the aggregate of both kinds with 20 in possession singly or in the aggregate, remains the same.

California is being offered the same option as last year: (a) a daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves or 10 white-winged doves or 10 in the aggregate of both kinds, with possession limit of 20 singly or in the aggregate; or (b) a daily bag and possession limit of mourning and white-winged doves of 10, singly or in the aggregate of both kinds.

Because of its large size, Texas will again be permitted to recommend three separate mourning dove seasons on the same basis as last year which includes the provision that hunting will be confined to the period of 12 noon to sunset. Texas, therefore, can select seasons of 50 half-days for each of three geographical areas.

Half-day shooting is defined as the period from 12 noon to sunset. "Full days" mean one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. If a split season is selected by any State (except Texas where this option is not applicable), the two hunting periods need not be of equal length.

White-winged Doves. Where a white-winged dove season is prescribed, in Arizona, California, and New Mexico, it will conform to the mourning dove season in

these States. A substantial increase occurred in this year's white-winged dove breeding population in Texas, which permits three alternate days for hunting this species in that State, with the same bag and possession limits and shooting hours as last year. In Texas the daily bag limit on mourning and white-winged doves is 10 singly or in the aggregate of both kinds, and the possession limit is 20 of which not more than 10 may be white-winged doves. In Arizona the daily bag limit is 10 mourning doves and 25 white-winged doves, and the possession limit is 10 mourning and 25 white-winged doves. (California and New Mexico white-winged dove daily bag and possession limits are discussed under mourning doves.)

Band-tailed Pigeons. Regulations for this species will remain the same as last year. Outside dates in two areas of California and in Oregon and Washington are from September 1 to January 10, with daily bag and possession limit of 6.

Waterfowl, Coots, and Wilson's Snipe in Alaska. The season, bag and possession limits for Wilson's snipe in Alaska will remain the same as in 1958. The season will be from September 1 through October 15.

The waterfowl and coot seasons in Alaska will run from September 1 to December 3, with the bag and possession limits remaining the same as in 1958, except in the case of brant.

Because there has been a significant decline in the brant population in the Pacific Flyway, the hunting of brant in Alaska during the 1959 season will coincide with the waterfowl season but the bag limit will be 2 instead of 3 and the possession limit 2 instead of 6.

Detailed regulations for the hunting of migratory waterfowl, coots, and Wilson's snipe in the United States will not be issued until late in August.

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